

River Otters of South Florida

ROSF



Research and Conservation Florida Otter Research

Otter Research at Florida Gulf Coast University

At this time (April, 2022) Victor L. Camp is the only FGCU faculty member conducting research on river otters (*Lontra canadensis*). He may also be the only individual at a Florida university or college investigating the river otter. Periodically FGCU undergraduate students have conducted minor otter investigations as part of their senior course requirements and this information is not included in this listing. A survey will be conducted to determine if any other individuals at Florida universities or colleges are investigating river otters. Once this survey is completed and compiled the results will be posted on this website.

Research Project Number 1

Principal Investigator: Victor L. Camp, Zoologist, Courtesy Faculty/River Otter Research, The Water School, Department of Ecology & Environmental, Florida Gulf Coast University, Fort Myers Florida

Project Title: The Biological and Physical Characteristics of Gated and Non-Gated Residential Communities: How do Biological and Physical Characteristics Enhance the Presence of River Otter (*Lontra canadensis*) in these Residential Communities

Project Purpose: To define the biological and physical characteristics that can be used in the design and development of residential communities and to provide opportunities for people and otters to live in harmony.

Project Status: Ongoing

Research Project Number 2 (temporarily on hold)

Principal Investigator: Victor L. Camp

Project Title: A Diet Analysis of River Otters (*Lontra canadensis*) In tropical southwest Florida

Project Purposes: 1. To provide identification resources (voucher specimen) of known or potential invertebrate and non-mammal vertebrates found to be prey species in river otter scats (spraints) 2. To provide resources necessary to establish a health index of prey species based on the presence of toxins in river otter prey species and 3. To create a guide of known and potential otter prey species in south Florida

Project Status: Ongoing

Note: This investigation is supplemented by Research Project Number 4 Research and supplements Research Project Number 5

Research Project Number 3

Principal Investigator: Victor L. Camp

Project Title: The Presence and Activities of Coastal Marine Otters in Southwest Florida

Project Purpose: A feasibility study to evaluate the potential for a graduate student to undertake continuation of this scientific investigation for a Master of Science degree at Florida Gulf Coast University

Project Status: Field work to begin in February 2019. On hold due to Covid in 2019 and will resume in late Spring 2022.

Research Project Number 4

Principal Investigator: Victor L. Camp

Project Title: Identification of Non-native Fishes as Prey of the River Otter (*Lontra canadensis*) in South Florida

Project Purpose: To determine the non-native fish species potentially consumed by the river otter and other piscivorous mammals and birds and to develop a supplemental guide for identification of non-native fishes of Florida

Project Status: Ongoing

Note: This investigation is supplemental to Research Project Number 2 and Project Number 5

Research Project Number 5

Principal Investigator: Victor L. Camp

Project Title: The River Otter (*Lontra canadensis*) as a Bio-indicator of the Health of Aquatic Environments in Southwest Florida.

Project Purpose: To provide data on river otter health collected from necropsy of road-killed and furtrapper carcasses

Project Status: Ongoing

Note: This investigation is supplemented by Project Number 2 and Project Number 4

Research Project Number 6

Principal Investigator: Victor L. Camp

Project Title: Otter Spotters: The Use of Volunteers to Collect Information on the Presence and Activities of River Otters in Gated and Non-Gated Communities and Golf Courses in Southwest Florida

Project Purpose: To determine the population of river otters inhabiting man-made communities in southwest Florida and to establish baseline otter population information for current and future analysis

Project Status: Ongoing. Active recruitment of volunteer Otter Spotters began in March 2019.

Note: This investigation is supplemented by river otter sighting reports solicited and reported to this website

21 February 2022